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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Foreign Agricultural Service
Washington 25, D.C.

October 27, 1955

TO: Foreign Training Division
Foreign Agriculture Service

FROM: W. W. Young

SUBJECT: Report on Short Training Course "Public Administration in
Agricultural Development"

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Introduction:

The course "Public Administration in Agricultural Development" has been devised to fill a "felt need." It represents an effort to inject a third dimension into the training of foreign agricultural specialists, i.e., to equip the technician with managerial know-how that will assist him to organize the activities of his staff and his associates in such a way as to ensure that the substantive technical and scientific training he has received is effectively applied in his home situation.

The participants first were introduced to the major elements in the administrative process (planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising, accounting), they then participated in a series of round table discussions of ways in which the content of the course might meet their needs in specified home situations and how the concepts acquired might most successfully be introduced in their home governments.

In selecting officers to conduct the various class sessions, two requirements were kept in mind: first, that the speaker must have a first-person familiarity with day to day problems of administration; second, that the speaker must have demonstrated an ability to teach, that is, to express himself before groups clearly and in simple terms.

Course Content:

The first of the series of meetings attempted to place the subject matter in proper context - to explain what is meant by the term "management," to explain differences between various administrative systems, to give some idea of the American philosophy of management and how it relates to the administration of agricultural programs. The group then was introduced to the five key elements in management (planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising, accounting). This was accomplished through a series of lectures, followed by discussion periods.

At the end of the first week, the group met to discuss curriculum. On the basis of the recommendations of the members, two additional lecture topics were selected for the Monday and Tuesday meetings (second week). They were: 1) Training; 2) Relations between the USDA, the Land Grant Colleges and the County Agent.

Wednesday and Thursday were reserved for practical exercises in how to develop and present a management plan. In these sessions members of the group took the initiative working out specific assignments on a case study basis.

The final day of the session was reserved for a summing up by the speakers who had directed the first day's activities and for general appraisal of the course by the various participants.

Teaching Methods:

Five general teaching techniques were employed. Topics were introduced by a brief lecture (about one hour). These lectures were followed by a discussion period - ordinarily self-generated.

In the second week, trainees were placed in two kinds of "first person" training situations. In phase one, selected members of the group explained the organizational rationale of their home offices and led discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of the patterns employed. In phase two, various members of the class participated in a "role playing" exercise, each member having the assignment of explaining the value of a particular management technique to a skeptical senior officer (this part also played by a member of the group).

In addition to these four teaching methods, a fifth was developed for Dr. Wakil of Afghanistan, whose special interest was in budget and fiscal operations. In this case a special laboratory course was devised that took him step by step through the obligating and accounting processes used in the Foreign Agricultural Service.

Selection of Trainees:

Students were selected primarily on the basis of their current job assignments with their home governments. They were assigned to this course after having completed their technical training in a particular field of agriculture.

Recommendations:

A General:

1. The course was too brief. I would suggest that any future schedule call for at least four weeks' training.

2. The course was too "Washington-oriented". There should be more participation by field personnel (the group felt that a county agent should be included in the teaching staff), more use of field situations as examples (the group felt that a state management situation would be more understandable to trainees from the smaller countries).

B. Course Content:

1. The course was too "academic". Workshops, laboratories, case studies, etc., should be employed to give the trainee a feeling of actually participating in the administrative process.

2. Scope of the course should be expanded to include: a) training, b) public relations and c) personnel relations.

C. Teaching Methods:

1. The caliber of the instructional staff was excellent, but - short, clear lecture outlines are an essential (detailed outlines tend to distract attention from the speaker), difficult words should be defined (several interruptions were necessary to bring out the meaning of certain technical terms used - they broke the continuity of the presentation), charts, graphs and/or flash cards are extremely useful (Dr. Draheim's presentation was very well received, in important part because his lecture was backed up by a series of simple graphics), examples relating to situations in foreign governments should be used whenever possible (trainees did not appear to be sensitive when their own government structures were used as horrible examples - but obviously the speaker should use a common sense approach in selecting cases).

2. Practical applications of management methods should be stressed. Case studies, workshops, and laboratory sessions should play a major role in training sessions. I feel that the formal lecture - discussion approach should be interspersed with field trips and short assignments-at-the-desk in appropriate offices. To go one step farther, I feel that the training course prepared for each foreign visitor should take into account the management training needs of the student, just as it takes into account his technical training needs.

D. Selection of Trainees:

1. Those selected to attend this course should be senior officials, i.e., those who will be in a position to affect administrative practices in their home governments.

2. An "excellent" knowledge of English is an essential - at least for the kind of course just completed. Though we used few technical terms and made a conscious effort to keep our presentation simple, one or two of the trainees failed to grasp the meaning of several of the lectures.

3. The home assignment of the trainee quite naturally influences the technical training he receives in this country - the same should apply to his management training. A banker has different interests from an extension man; a director of a program generally will require a different orientation than a bureau chief in a large agency. These differences should be kept in mind as a course is developed. It is quite likely that separate short courses will have to be devised to meet the needs of various categories of agriculturists; the field work assignments will certainly have to be tailor-made to meet individual needs.

Conclusions:

I feel that we have made a good beginning. As this program develops, I think we will find that it offers greater possibilities for constructive changes in the pattern of agriculture in under-developed countries than any other single field of study. Management is an area in which we can claim especial competence - appreciation of this fact has been late in coming, but now a beginning has been made.

The first group of trainees will face major problems as they attempt to transmit what they have learned through the channels of their home governments - they are all aware of this (as one Pakistani said: "We must be prepared to fight"). We can do three things to make their job easier:

- 1) We can bring senior officials here on leader grants for the express purpose of exposing them to the American managerial method. (Letters are already being written to these men advising them of the special management training their subordinates have received).
- 2) We can expand and multiply management training courses so that a "second wave" of management-oriented officials will be available to support the efforts of this pioneer group.
- 3) We can by mail, perhaps by newsletter, certainly through ICA, agriculture field officers, provide our management course graduates with advice, tactful official support and, most important, with the feeling that we are taking a friendly interest in the progress they are making toward applying the fundamentals of good management in their home situations.

